

# *A Letter from a Member of the House of Commons in Ireland, to a Member of the House of Commons in England, concerning the Sacramental Test.*

S I R,



**I** Received your Letter, wherein you tell me of the Strange Representations made of us on your side of the Water. The Instance you are pleased to mention, is that of the Presbyterian Missionary, who according to your Phrase, hath been lately Persecuted in *Drogheda* for his Religion: But it is ealie to observe, how mighty Industrious some People have been for Three or Four Years past, to hand about Stories of the Hardships, the Merits, the Number, and the Power of the Presbyterians in *Ireland*, to raise formidable Idea's of the Dangers of Popery there, and to Transmit all for *England*, improved by great Additions, and with special care to have them Inserted with Comments in those Infamous Weekly Papers that Infest your Coffee-Houses. So, when the Clause Enacting a Sacramental Test was put in Execution, it was given out in *England*, that half the Justices of Peace through this Kingdom, had laid down their Commissions, whereas upon Examination, the whole Number was found to amount only to a Dozen, or Thirteen; and those generally of the lowest Rate in Fortune and Understanding, and some of them Superannuated. So, when the Earl of *P-----ke* was in *Ireland*, and the Parliament Sitting, a formal Story was very gravely carried to his Excellency by some Zealous Members, of a Priest newly arrived from Abroad, to the North-West parts of *Ireland*, who had publickly Preached to his People, to fall a Murthering the Protestants; which tho' Invented to serve an end, they were then upon, and are still driving at, it was presently handed over, and Printed with shrewd Remarks by your worthy Scriblers. In like manner, the Account of that Person who was lately Expelled our University, for Reflecting on the Memory of King *William*; what a Dust it raised, and how foully it was related, is fresh enough in Memory. Neither would People be convinc'd till the University was at the pains of Publishing a Latin Paper to Justify themselves. And, to mention no more, this Story of the Persecution at *Drogheda*, how it has been Spread and Aggravated, what Consequences drawn from it, and what Reproaches fix'd on those who have least deserved them, we are already Inform'd. Now if the end of all this Proceeding were a Secret and Mystery, I should not undertake to give it an Interpretation, but care has been taken to give it sufficient Explanation. First by Addresses Artificially (if not Illegally) procured, to shew the miserable State of the Dissenters in *Ireland*, by reason of the Sacramental Test, and to desire the Queen's Intercession, that it might be Repealed. Then it is manifest that our ----- when he was last year in *England*, Solicited in Person several Members of both Houses, to have it Repeal'd by an Act there, though it be a matter purely National, that cannot possibly Interfere with the Trade and Interest of *England*; and though he himself appeared formerly the most Zealous of all Men against the Injustice of binding a Nation by Laws, to which they do not Consent. And lastly, those Weekly Libellers, when ever they get a Tale by the end, relating to *Ireland*, without ever troubling their thoughts about the Truth, always end it with an Application against the *Sacramental Test*, and the absolute necessity there is of Repealing it in both Kingdoms. I know it may be reckoned a weakness to say any thing of such Trifles, as are below a serious Man's Notice, much less would I disparage the Un-

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Understanding of any Party, to think they would choose the Vilest and most Ignorant among Mankind, to employ them for Asserters of a Cause: I shall only say, that the Scandalous Liberty those Wretchs take, would hardly be allowed, if it were not mingled with Opinions, that some Men would be glad to advance. Besides, how Insipid soever these Papers are, they seem to be levelled to the Understandings of a great Number; they are grown a necessary part in Coffee-House Furniture, and some time or other happen to be read by Customers of all Ranks, for Curiosity or Amusement; because they lye always in the way. One of these Authors, (the Fellow that was Pillor'd, I have forgot his Name) is indeed so Grave, Sententious, Dogmatical a Rogue, that there is no enduring him; the *Observer* is much the Brisker of the Two, and I think farther gone of late in *Lyes* and *Impudence* than his *Presbyterian Brother*; the reason why I mention him, is to have an occasion of letting you know, that you have not dealt so *Gallantly* with us, as we did with you in a Parallel Case: Last year a Paper was brought here from *England*, called, *A Dialogue between the A. Bp. of Canterbury and Mr. Higgins*, which we ordered to be Burnt by the Common Hangman, as it well deserved; tho' we have no more to do with his Grace of *Canterbury*, than you have with the A. Bp. of *Dublin*; nor can you Love and Reverence your Prelate more, than we do ours, whom you tamely suffer to be abused openly, and by Name, by that Paultry Rascal of an *Observer*; and lately upon an Affair wherein he had no concern; I mean the Business of the Missionary at *Drogheda*, wherein our excellent Primate was Engaged, and did nothing but according to *Law* and *Discretion*. But because the Lord A. Bp. of *Dublin* hath been upon several Occasions of late Years, Misrepresented in *England*; I would willingly set you right in his Character. For his great Sufferings and Eminent Services, he was by the late King promoted to the See of *Derry*. About the same time, he writ a Book to justify the *Revolution*, wherein was an Account of *K. James's* Proceedings in *Ireland*, and the late A. Bp. *Tillotson* recommended it to the King as the most serviceable Treatise, that could have been Published at such a Juncture. And as his Grace set out upon *Revolution Principles*, he has proceeded so ever since, as a Loyal Subject to the Queen, entirely for the Succession in the Protestant Line, and for ever excluding the Pretender; and tho' a firm Friend to the Church, yet with *Indulgence* towards *Dissenters*; as appears from his Conduct at *Derry*, where he was settled for many Years among the most Virulent Sect; yet upon his Removal to *Dublin*, they parted from him with Tears in their Eyes, and Universal Acknowledgments of his *Wisdom* and *Goodness*. For the rest it must be owned, he does not busy himself by entring deep into any party, but rather spends his time in Acts of *Hospitality* and *Charity* in Building of Churches, Repairing his Palace, in Introducing and Preferring the worthiest Persons he can find, without other Regards; in short, in the Practice of all Vertues that can become a Publick or Private Life. This and more if possible is due to so Excellent a Person, who may be justly reckoned among the greatest and most Learned Prelates of his Age, however his Character may be defild by such mean and dirty Hands as those of the *Observer*, or such as employ him, who ought not to have forgot that in the late Prosecution of *Forbes* for Reflecting on King *William*, the A. Bp. did so distinguish himself, that the City gave him their publick Thanks. I now come to answer the other part of your Letter, and shall give you my Opinion freely about *Repealing the Sacramental Test*: Only where, as you desire my thoughts as a Friend, and not as I am a Member of Parliament, I must assure you they are exactly the same in both Capacities. I must begin by telling you, we are generally surprized at your *Wonderful* kindness to us on this Occasion in being so very *Industrious* to teach us to see our Interests in a Point where we are so unable to see it our selves, This hath given us some *Suspicion*; and tho' in my own particular, I am hugely bent to believe, that whenever you Concern your selves in our Affairs, it is Certainly for our Good, yet I have the misfortune to be something singular in this Belief, and therefore I never attempt to justify it, but Content my self to possess my own Opinion in private, for fear of encountering Men of more Wit, or Words than I have to spare.

We at this distance who see nothing of the *Spring of Actions* are forc'd by meer Conjecture

Conjecture to Assign *two reasons* for your desiring us to repeal the *Sacramental Test*, one is, because you are said to Imagine it will be one Step towards the like good work in *England*, the other more Immediate, that it will open a way for Rewarding several Persons *who have well deserved upon a great Occasion*, but who are now unqualified thro' that Impediment.

I do not frequently quote Poets, especially English, but I remember there is in some of Mr. Cowley's Love Verses, a Strain that I thought extraordinary at Fifteen, and have often since imagin'd it to be Spoken by *Ireland*, in reference to *England*;

*Forbid it Heaven my Life should be.*

*Weigh'd with her least Conveniency.*

In short whatever advantage you propose to your Selves by *repealing the Sacramental Test*, Speak it out plainly, 'tis the best Argument you can use, for we Value your Interest much more than our own, if your *little Finger*, be sore, and you think a *Foullice* made of our *Vitals* will give it any ease, speak the word and it should be done: The Interest of our *whole Kingdom* is at any time ready to strike to that of your *poorest Fishing Town*, it is hard you will not accept our Services unless we believe at the same time, that you are only consulting our profit, and giving us marks of *Your Love*. If there be a Fire at some distance, and I immediately blow up *my House* before there be Occasion, because *you* are a man of Quality, and apprehend some danger to a Corner of *your Stable*, yet why should *you* require *me* to attend next Morning at your Levee with my humble Thanks for the favour you have done me?

If we might be allowed to judge for our Selves, we had abundance of Benefit by the *Sacramental Test*, and foresee a number of mischiefs would be the Consequence of *Repealing* it, and, and we Conceive the *Objections* made against it by the *Dissenters* are of no manner of Force; they tell us of their Merits in the late War in *Ireland*, and how cheerfully they Engaged for the safety of the Nation; that had they thought they had been fighting only other People's Quarrels, perhaps it might have cooled their Zeal, and that for the future they shall Sit down quietly, *and let us do our Work our selves*: Nay that it is necessary they should do so, since they cannot take up Arms under the Penalty of High-Treason.

Now supposing them to have done their Duty, as I believe they did, and not to trouble them about the *fly on the Wheel*; I thought *Liberty, Property, and Religion* had been the three Subjects of the Quarrel, and have not all those been amply Secured to them? had they at that time a *mental Reservation* for Power and Employments? and must those two Articles be added hence forward in our National Quarrels? It is grown a mighty Conceit among some Men to melt down the Phrase of a *Church Established by Law* into that of the *Religion of the Magistrate*; of which Appellations, it is easier to find the Reason, than the Sense: If by the Magistrate they mean the Prince, the Expression includes a Fallhood; for when King *James* was Prince, the *Established Church* was the same it is now. If by the same word they mean the *Legislature*, we desire no more. Be that as it will, we of *this Kingdom* believe the Church of *Ireland* to be the *National Church*, and the *only one Established by Law*, and are willing by the same Law to give a Toleration to *Dissenters*; but if once we Repeal our *Sacramental Test*, and grant a Toleration, or Suspend the Execution of the Penal Laws, I do not see how we can be said to have any *Established Church* remaining; or rather why there will not be as many *Established Churches* as there are *Sects of Dissenters*. No, say they, yours will still be the *National Church*, Because your *Bishops and Clergy*, are maintained by the *Publick*; But that I suppose will be of no long duration, and it would be very unjust it should, because to speak in *Tindall's* Phrase, it is not reasonable that *Revenues should be annex'd to one Opinion more than another*, when all are equally Lawful, and 'tis that Author's Maxim, *That no Free-born Subject ought to pay for maintaining Speculations, he does not believe*. But why should any Man upon account of *Opinions* he cannot help, be deprived the Opportunity of serving his *Queen and Country*? Their Zeal is Commendable, and when Employments go a Begging for want of Hands, they shall be sure to have the *Refusal*, only upon Condition they will not pretend to them upon Maxims that equally include *Atheists, Turks, Jews, Infidels, and Hereticks*, or which is still more dangerous, even *Papists* them-



themselves; The former you allow, the other you deny, because these last own a *Foreign Power*, and therefore must be shut out. But there is no great Weight in this, for their Religion can suit with *Free States*, with *Limited* or absolute *Monarchies* as well as a *Better*, and the Pope's Power in *France* is but a *Shadow*, so that upon this Foot there need be no great danger to the Constitution by admitting Papists to Employments. I will help you to enough of them who shall be ready to allow the Pope as little Power here as you please, and the *Bare Opinion* of his being Vicar of Christ, is but a *Speculative Point* for which no Man it seems ought to be deprived the Capacity of serving his Country.

But if you please, I will tell you the great Objections we have against *Repealing this same Sacramental Test*. It is, that we are verily perswaded the Consequence will be an entire *Alteration* of Religion among us in *no great* compass of Years. And, pray observe how we reason here in *Ireland* upon this Matter.

We observe the *Scots* in our Northren Parts, to be a *Brave, Industrious People*, extremely Devoted to their Religion, and full of an undisturbed Affection towards each other. Numbers of that Noble Nation, invited by the Fertilities of the Soil, are glad to exchange their *Barren Hills* of *Loughaber*, by a Voyage of three Hours, for our *Fruitful Vales* of *Down* and *Antrim*, so Productive of that Grain, which at little trouble, and less Expence finds Diet, and Lodging for themselves, and their Cattle. These People by their *Extreme Parsimony, wonderful Dexterity in Dealing, and firm Adherence to one another*, soon grow into Wealth from the smallest Beginnings, never are rooted out where they once fix, and encrease daily by new Supplies; besides when they are the superior Number in any Tract of Ground, they are not over patient of Mixture, but such, whom they cannot *Assimilate*, soon find it their Interest to *Remove*. I have done all in my Power on some Land of my own, to preserve two or three *English Fellows* in their Neighbourhood, but found it impossible, tho' one of them thought he had sufficiently made his Court by turning *Presbyterian*. Add to all this, that they bring along with them from *Scotland*, a most formidable *No-tion* of our Church, which they look upon at least three Degrees worse than *Popery*; and it is Natural it should be so, since they come over full Fraught with that Spirit which taught them, to *abolish Episcopacy at home*.

Then we proceed further, and observe, that the Gentlemen of Employments here, make a very considerable Number in the *House of Commons*, and have no other Merit but that of doing their Duty in their several Stations; Therefore when the *Test is Repealed*, it will be highly reasonable they should give Place to those who have much greater Services to plead. The Commissions of the Revenue are soon Disposed of, and the Collectors, and other Officers throughout the Kingdom, are generally appointed by the Commissioners, which gives them a mighty Influence in every County. As much may be said of the great Officers in the Law; And when this Door is open to let Dissenters into the Commissions of the Peace, to make them *High-Sheriffs, Mayors of Corporations, and Officers of the Army and Militia*: I do not see how it can be otherwise, considering their Industry, and our *Supineness*, but that they may in a very few Years, grow to a Majority in the *House of Commons*, and Consequently make themselves the *National Religion*, and have a fair Pretence to demand the *Revenues* of the Church for their Teachers. I know it will be Objected, that if all this should happen as I describe; yet the *Presbyterian Religion* could never be made the *National* by Act of Parliament; because our Bishops are so great a Number in the *House of Lords*, and without a Majority there, the Church could not be *Abolished*. But I have two very good Expedients for that, which I shall leave you to guess, and I dare Swear our . . . . . here has often thought on, especially, having endeavoured at one of them so lately. That this Design is not so Foreign from some Peoples thoughts, I must let you know, that an Honest *Bell-Weather* of our Country (you have him now in *England*, I wish you could keep him there) had the *Impudence* in Parliament time, (I think it was last Year) to shake my Lord Bishop of *Killaloe* by his *Lawn Sleeve*, and tell him in a *Threatning manner*, That he hoped to live to see the Day, when there should not be one of his Order in the Kingdom. Now, because that Gentleman is Ambitious to be thought one of our Patriots; I can put him upon a much better way of serving his Country, which is to take



take some Course that himself and his whole *Worthy Family* may be . . . . . tomorrow Morning; And if this had been done (How long is it since my Lord *Capell's* Government?) about Fifteen Years ago, our miserable *Betrayed Kingdom* had been some Millions the *Better*.

These last Lines perhaps you may think a *Digression*; Therefore to return, I have told you the Consequences we fully reckon upon from *Repealing the Sacramental Test*, which although the greatest Number of such as are for doing it, are actually in no manner of Pain about, and many of them care not Three Pence whether there be any Church or no, yet because they pretend to argue from *Conscience*, as well as *Policy* and *Interest*, I thought it proper to Understand, and Answer them accordingly.

Now Sir, in answer to your Question, Whether if an Attempt should be made here for *Repealing the Sacramental Test*, it would be likely to Succeed? The Number of *Protest Dissenters* in this *Parliament* was, as I remember something under a *Dozen*, and I cannot call to mind above *Thirty* others who were *Expelled* to fall in with them. This is certain, that the *Presbyterian Party* having with great *Industry* Mustered up their Forces, did endeavour one Day, upon occasion of a hint in my Lord *P—k's* Speech, to Introduce a Debate about *Repealing the Test Clause*, when there appeared at least *Four to One* odds against them; and the ablest of those who were reckoned the most *Stanch* and *Thorough* Whigs, upon all other occasions, fell off with an *Abhorrence* at the first mention of this. I must desire you to take Notice, That the Terms of *Whig* and *Tory*, do not properly express the Different Interests in our *Parliament*. I remember when I was last in *England*, I told the *King*; that the highest *Tories* we had with us, would make tolerable *Whigs* there; this was certainly right, and still in the general continues so, unless you have since admitted new Characteristics, which did not come within our Definition. Whoever bears a true Veneration for the *Glorious Memory* of *K. William*, as our Great Deliverer from *Papery* and *Slavery*: Whoever is firmly Loyal to our present *Queen*, with an utter *Abhorrence* and *Detestation* of the *Pretender*; Whoever approves the Succession to the *Crown* in the *House of Hannover*, and is for Preserving the *Doctrine* and *Discipline* of the Church of *England*, with a *Toleration* for *Dissenters*, such a Man we think Acts upon *Revolution Principles*, and may be justly allowed a *Whig*, and I believe there are not six Members in our *House of Commons*, who may not fairly come under this Description; so that the Parties among us are made up on one side of *Moderate Whigs*, and on the other, of *Presbyterians* and their *Abettors*; by which last I mean, such who can equally go to Church or a *Conventicle*, or such who are *Indifferent* to all Religion in general, or lastly, such who affect to bear a Personal *Rancor* towards the *Clergy*. These last, are a Set of Men not of our own Growth, their Principles at least have been Imported of late Years; yet this whole Party put together, will hardly, I am confident amount to above Fifty Men in *Parliament*, which can hardly be worked up into a Majority of *Three Hundred*.

As to the *House of Lords*, the Difficulty there is conceived at least as great as in *Ours*, so many of our *Temporal Peers* live in *England*, that the *Bishops* are generally pretty near a Par of the House; and we reckon they will be all to a Man against *Repealing the Test*; I never heard of above one or two at most, whom there was the least Ground to suspect, and yet their Lordships are generally thought as good *Whigs* upon the *Revolution Principles* as any in the Kingdom: There are indeed a few Lay Lords, who appear to have no very great Devotion for *Episcopacy*; . . . . .

but these are in no sort of a Number to carry any Point against a *Conjunction* of the rest with the whole *Bench* of *Bishops*.

Besides, the whole Body of our *Clergy* are utterly against *Repealing the Test*, though they are entirely Devoted to *Her Majesty*; and hardly one in a Hundred who are not very good *Whigs* in our Acceptation of the Word. And I must let you know that *We* of *Ireland* are not yet come up to other Folks Refinements; for we generally Love and Esteem our *Clergy*, and think they Deserve it: Nay we are apt to lay some Weight upon their Opinion, and would not willingly *Disoblige* them, at least unless it were upon some greater Point of Interest than this; And their Judgement in the present Affair is the more to be regarded, because they are the last Persons who will be affected by it; this makes us think them *Impartial*, and that their Concern is only for Religion and the In-

*Interest of the Kingdom.* Because the Act which *Repeals the Test*, will only Qualify a Lay-man for an Employment, but not a Presbyterian or Anabaptist Parson for a Church-Living. Now I must take leave to inform you, that several Members of our House, and myself among the rest, knowing some time ago what was upon the Anvil, went to all the Clergy; we knew of any Distinction, and desired their Judgement in the Matter, wherein we found a most Wonderful Agreement; there being but One Divine that we could hear of in the whole Kingdom, who appeared of a contrary Sentiment, wherein he afterwards stood alone in the Convocation, very little to his Credit, tho' as he hoped very much to his Interest.

You indeed hint something to me about two Divines of this Kingdom now in London, which seems to differ from what I have said of the rest. I have not the Honour to be acquainted with either, and I think they have not been much among us; but by what I have heard of them, I do not believe they are One Degree greater Whigs than Five Hundred of their Brethren, and I have heard, that One of them (who is they say made chief Chaplain to our New Governour) has always declared against Repealing the Test: He is reckoned a Worthy Person; and I know not how it can be consistent with that Character, to employ his Pen in a Publick or Private manner against his Opinion; Neither do I think he designs it. As for the other Divine, we all expected here, that he was to be the Person his Excellency would bring over his Chaplain: But since that hath otherwise happened, it may not be altogether improbable, that his great Friends have dropped him, which Disappointment, - - - - - may chance to Cool his Zeal that Way, if he had any before, of which I cannot accuse him. However that be, he will find it a Difficult matter, with his skill in Politicks, or Talent at Ridicule, backed by all the Wit He is said to be Master of, to Reason or Laugh us out of the Sacramental Test; and will find by the Event that my Predictions are truer than his.

But if I am mistaken in my Sentiments of those two Divines, there is a Third now among you, of as much Consideration as either, and as good a Whig in all the necessary Fundamentals, from whose Opinions, you may Form a Truer Judgement of his Brethren here, And I dare engage he will not be Reserved in Owning them; and, besides, he has reason to know as much of our House of Commons as any of its Members, his Office giving him free Access there at all times.

I will now Consider a little the Arguments offered to shew the Advantages, or rather the necessity of Repealing the Test in Ireland. We are told, the Popish Interest is here so Formidable, that all Hands should be joyned to keep it under, that the only names of Distinction among us, ought to be those of Protestant and Papist; and that this Expedient is the only means to Unite all Protestants upon one common Bottom; all which is nothing but Misrepresentation and Mistake. If we were under any real fear of the Papists in this Kingdom, it would be hard to think Us so stupid, not to be equally apprehensive with others, since We are likely to be the greatest and more immediate Sufferers; But on the contrary, we look upon them to be altogether as Inconsiderable as the Women and Children. Their Lands are almost entirely taken from them, and they are rendred incapable of Purchasing any more; And for the little that remains, Provision is made by the late Act against Popery, that it will daily Crumble away. To prevent which, some of the most Considerable among them, are already turned Protestants, and so in all Probability will many more. Then, the Popish Priests are all Registered, and without Permission (which I hope will not be granted) they can have no Successors; So that the Protestant Clergy will find it perhaps no Difficult matter to bring great Numbers over to the Church; and in the mean time, the Common People without Leaders, without Discipline or Natural Courage, being little better than Hewers of Wood, and Drawers of Water, are out of all Capacity of doing any Mischief, if they were ever so well inclin'd. Neither are they at all likely to joyn in any considerable Numbers with an Invader, having found so ill Success when they were much more Numerous and Powerful, when they had a Prince of their own Religion to Head them, had been Trained for some Years under a Popish Deputy, and received such Mighty Aids from the French King.

As to that Argument used for Repealing the Test, that it will unite all the Protestants against the common Enemy; I wonder by what Figure those Gentlemen speak, who are  
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pleased to *Advance* it. Suppose in order to encrease the Friendship between *You* and *Me*, a Law should pass, that I must have half *your Estate*; do you think that would *much advance the Union between Us*? Or suppose I share my Fortune equally between my *own Children* and a *Stranger*, whom I take into my Protection, will that be a method to *Unite* them? Its an odd way of *Uniting Parties*, to Deprive a *Majority* of part of their *Ancient Right*, by Conferring it on a *Faction*, who had *never any Right at all*; and therefore cannot be said to suffer any loss or injury if it be *Refused* them. Neither is it very clear, how far *some People* may Stretch the Term of *common Enemy*; How many are there of those that call themselves *Protestants*, who look upon our Worship to be *Idolatrous*, as well as that of the *Papists*; and with great Charity put *Prelacy* and *Popery*, together as *Terms convertible*.

And therefore there is one *Small doubt* I would be willingly satisfied in, before I agree to the *Repealing of the Test*, that is, whether, *these same Protestants*, when they have by their *Dexterity*, made themselves the *National Religion*, and disposed the *Church Revenues* among their *Pastors* or *themselves*, will be so kind to allow us *Dissenters*, I do not say a share in Employments, but a *bare Toleration by Law*. The Reason of my Doubt is, because I have been so very Idle as to have read above fifty Pamphlets written by as many *Presbyterian Divines*, loudly disclaiming this *Idle Toleration*, some of them Calling it (I know not how Properly) a *Reg of Popery*, and all agreeing, it was to *Establish Iniquity by a Law*; Now, I would be glad to know *When* and *Where* their Successors have *Renounced* this Doctrine, and before what *Witnesses*? Because methinks I should be loath to see my poor *Titular Bishop in Partibus* seized on by mistake in the Dark for a Jesuit, or to be forced my self to keep a *Chaplain Disguis'd* like my *Bur-ler*, and steal to Prayers in a Back Room, as my Grandfather used in those times when the *Church of England* was *Malignant*: But this is ripping up old Quarrels long forgot; *Popery* is now the *Common Enemy*, against which we must all *Unite*; I have been tired in History with the perpetual Folly of those States who call in *Foreigners* to assist them against a *Common Enemy*. But the mischief was, these Allies would never be brought to allow that the *Common Enemy* was quite subdued: And they had reason; for it proved at last, that one part of the *Common Enemy* was those who called them in, and so the *Allies* became at length the *Masters*.

'Tis agreed among *Naturalists* that a *Lion* is a *Larger*, a *Stronger* and *more Dangerous* Enemy than a *Cat*, yet if a man were to have his Choice, either a *Lion* at his Foot, Bound fast with three or four Chains, his Teeth drawn out and his Claws pared to the Quick, or an *Angry Cat* in full Liberty at his *Throat*; he would take no long time to determine.

I have been sometimes admiring the *Wonderful Significancy* of that word *Persecution*, and what various Interpretations it hath acquired even within my Memory. When I was a Boy, I often heard the *Presbyterians* complain that they were not *Permitted* to serve God in their own way, they said they did not *Grudge* us our Employments, but thought that all Men, who live Peaceably ought to have *Liberty of Conscience*, and *leave* to Assemble. That Impediment being removed at the Revolution, they soon learned to Swallow the *Sacramental Test*, and began to take very large Steps, wherein all that offered to oppose them, were called *Men of a Persecuting Spirit*. During the time the Bill against *Occasional Conformity* was on Foot, *Persecution* was every day rung in our Ears, and now at last the *Sacramental Test* it self has the same Name. Where then is this matter likely to end, when the obtaining of *One* request is only used as a step to demand Another? A Lover is ever complaining of *Cruelty* while any thing is denied him, and when the Lady ceases to be *Cruel*, She is from the next Moment at his *Mercy*: So *Persecution* it seems, is every thing, that will not leave it in Mens Power to *Persecute Others*.

There is one Argument offer'd against a *Sacramental Test*, by a sort of Men who are content to be Stiled of the *Church of England*, who perhaps attend it's Service in the *Morning*, and go with their Wives to a Conventicle in the *Afternoon*, Confessing they hear very good Doctrine in both. These Men are much offended that so Holy an Institution as that of the Lord's-Supper should be made subservient to such Mercenary purposes as the getting of an Employment. Now, it seems, the Law concluding all men to be Members of that Church, wherethey Receive the Sacrament, and

supposing



Supposing all Men to live like *Christians* (especially those who are to have *Employments*) did Imagine they received the Sacrament *in Course* about four times a Year, and therefore only desired it might appear by Certificate to the *Publick*, that such who took an Office were *Members of the Church Established*, by doing their *Ordinary Duty*. However, lest we should offend them, we have often desired they would deal *Candidly* with us; for if the matter stuck only *there*, we would propose it in *Parliament*, that every man who takes an *Employment*, should instead of *Receiving the Sacrament*, be obliged to *Swear*, that he is a *Member of the Church of Ireland by Law Established*, with *Episcopacy* and so forth; and as they do now in *Scotland*, to be true to the *Kirk*. But when we drive them thus far, they always retire to the main Body of the Argument, Urge the Hardship that Men should be deprived the Liberty of serving their *Queen and Country* on account of their Conscience. And in short have recourse to the Common stile of their half Brethren. Now, whither this be a sincere way of Arguing, I will appeal to any other Judgment but theirs.

There is another Topick of Clamor somewhat Parallel to the foregoing; it seems, by the *Test Clause*, the *Military Officers* are obliged to Receive the Sacrament as well as the *Civil*. And it is a Matter of some Patience to hear the Dissenters Declaiming upon this occasion: They cry they are Disarmed, they are used like *Papists*; when an Enemy appears at Home, or from Abroad, they must sit still, and see their Throats cut, or be Hang'd for High-Treason if they offer to Defend themselves. Miserable Condition! Woful Dilemma! It is happy for us all, the *Pretender* was not apprised of this *Passive Presbyterian Principle*, else he would have Infalibly Landed, in our Northern Parts, and found them all sat down in their Formalities, as the *Gauls* did the *Roman Senators*, ready to dye with *Honour* in their Callings: Sometimes to appease their Indignation we venture to give them Hopes, that in such a Case, the Government will perhaps connive, and not be so severe as to Hang them for Defending it against the *Letter* of the Law, to which they readily Answer, That they will not lye at our Mercy, but let us fight our Battles our selves: Sometimes we offer to get an *Act*, by which upon all *Popish* Insurrections at Home, or *Popish* Invasions from Abroad, the Government shall be Empowered to Grant Commissions to *All* Protestants whatsoever, without that *Persecuting Circumstance* of obliging them to say their Prayers when they receive the *Sacrament*; but they abhor all thoughts of *Occasional* Commissions; they will not do our Drudgery, and we reap the Benefit: It is not worth their while to Fight *pro Aris & Focis*, and they had rather lose their *Estates, Liberties, Religion and Lives*, than the Pleasure of Governing.

But to bring this Discourse towards a *Conclusion*; if the *Dissenters* will be satisfied with such a *Tolerati-*on by a Law as hath been granted them in *England*, I believe the Majority of both Houses will fall readily in with it; further it will be *Hard* to persuade this House of Commons and perhaps *much harder* the next. For to say the Truth, we make a mighty difference here between *suffering Thistles to grow among us*, and *rearing them for Poles*. We are fully convinced in our Consciences, that we shall always *Tolerate* them; but not quite so fully, that they will always *Tolerate us*, when it comes to their turn; and we are the *Majority*, and we are in *Possession*.

He that Argues in Defence of a Law in force not Antiquated or Obsolete, but lately enacted, is certainly on the safer side; and may be allowed, to Point out the Dangers he conceives to foresee in the Abrogation of it.

For if the Consequences of *Repealing this Clause*, should at some time or other enable the *Presbyterians* to work themselves up into the *National Church*; instead of *Uniting Protestants*, it would sow *Eternal Divisions* among them. First, their own Sects, which now lye Dormant, would be soon at Cuffs again with each other about *Power and Preferment*, and the *Dissenting Episcopal*s, perhaps discontented to such a Degree, as upon some fair unhappy Occasion, would be able to shake the *firmest Loyalty*, which none can deny *theirs* to be.

Neither is it very difficult to Conjecture from some *late Proceedings*, at what a rate this *Faction* is like to *Drive* wherever it gets the *Whip* and the *Spear*. They have already set up *Courses of Spiritual Judicature* in open contempt of the Laws. They send *Missionaries* every where, without being Incited, in order to *Convert the Church of England Folks to Christianity*. They are as vigilant as I know who, to attend Persons at their Death-Beds; and for Purposes much alike; and what *Practices such Principles* as these (with many others that might be invidious to mention) may *Spawn*, when they are laid out to the *Sun*, you may Determine at Leisure.

Lastly, whether we are so entirely sure of their Loyalty upon the present Foot of Government as you may Imagine their Detractors make a Question; which however, does I think by no means affect the Body of Dissenters; but the Instance produced, is of some among their *Leading Teachers* in the North, who have refused the *Abjuration Oath*, and yet continue their *Preaching*, and have abundance of *Follower*s. The Particulars are out of my Head, but the Fact is Notorious enough, and I believe has been *Published*, I think it a Pity it has not been *Remedied*.

Thus I have fairly given you, Sir, my own Opinion, as well as that of a *great Majority* in both Houses here relating to this weighty Affair, upon which I am confident you may securely reckon. I will leave you to make what use of it you please.

For the other part of your Letter I can only tell you, that I have Obey'd your Commands as far as it was in my Power, and I hope well enough to Encourage you to Honour me with more.

Dublin, Decemb. 4<sup>th</sup>, 1708.

I am with great respect, Sir, Yours, &c.

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